

# Update: Impact of the COVID Pandemic on California Children's Well-Being



Prior to the COVID pandemic, California ranked a dismal 35th nationally in children's well-being. Now, the ongoing public health emergency has exposed the already-frail infrastructure of supports for California's children and families and exacerbated the pre-existing disparities in our child-serving systems. Systemic racism is at the root of health, education, income, and other inequities, which have only deepened during this crisis. State leaders must take action to support children who have been impacted the most during this time.



## ECONOMIC INSECURITY

Many Californians have had difficulty paying usual expenses, but households with kids fared the worst:

**1/2** of households **with** kids had difficulty paying bills **>** **1/3** of households **without** kids had difficulty paying bills<sup>1</sup>

**Latino children are more likely to have a caregiver in a sector highly impacted by COVID-related shutdowns.**<sup>2</sup>

**STEPS WE CAN TAKE** [endchildpovertyca.org/covid-19-action](https://endchildpovertyca.org/covid-19-action)



## CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

Child neglect and abuse is going unreported, leaving kids in danger.

**28%** fewer calls to California child abuse hotlines in April-August 2020 versus April-August 2019, because kids are not in contact with teachers, doctors, and other mandated reporters.<sup>3</sup>

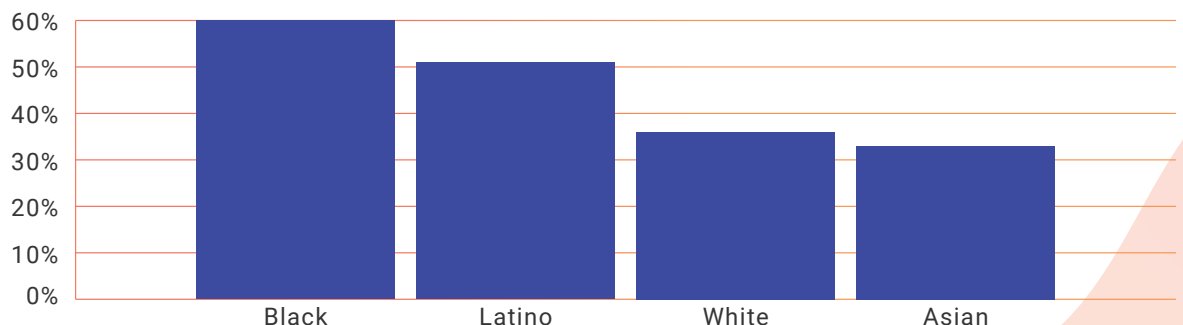
**STEPS WE CAN TAKE** [childrennow.org/blog/2020-covid-child-welfare](https://childrennow.org/blog/2020-covid-child-welfare)



## FOOD INSECURITY

In December 2020, 46% of California households with children didn't always have the food they wanted, compared to 35% of households without kids.<sup>4</sup> Within these numbers, racial disparities in food insecurity persist.

### Racial Disparities: Food Insecure California Households with Kids (December 2020)<sup>4</sup>



**STEPS WE CAN TAKE** <https://nourishca.org/get-involved/action-center/state-legislative-advocacy/covid-19/>



### PHYSICAL HEALTH

**40%** lower child vaccination rate in April 2020 versus April 2019, remaining too low today. This put out kids at risk for other infectious diseases like measles.<sup>5</sup>

**STEPS WE CAN TAKE** [childrennow.org/blog/2020-covid-health](https://childrennow.org/blog/2020-covid-health)



### MENTAL HEALTH

Children and parents are experiencing increased depression and anxiety due to pandemic-related school closures, isolation, and other concerns.<sup>6</sup> Community trauma such as ongoing police violence can add to the stressors children face, especially Black kids.<sup>7</sup>

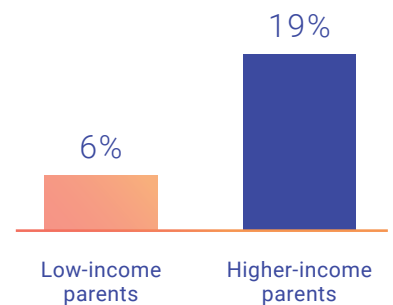
**STEPS WE CAN TAKE** [acesaware.org/heal/covid19](https://acesaware.org/heal/covid19)



### CONNECTION TO CARING ADULTS

Children are missing usual connections to caring adults like teachers, counselors, and child care providers.<sup>8</sup> For example, low-income students were less likely to have access to in-person learning (see chart).<sup>9</sup> Also, many child care providers have already gone out of business, or are in dire financial straits.<sup>10</sup>

Percent of parents reporting their kids have access to in-person learning<sup>9</sup>



**STEPS WE CAN TAKE** [childrennow.org/blog/2020-covid-education](https://childrennow.org/blog/2020-covid-education)

### Endnotes

- 1 United States Census Bureau (December 2020). Household Pulse Survey: December 9-21, Difficulty Paying Usual Household Expenses in the Last 7 Days, by Select Characteristics: California. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/demo/hhp/hhp21.html>.
- 2 California Budget & Policy Center (April 2020). California Workers With Less Education, People of Color, and Immigrants are at Greatest Financial Risk Due to COVID-19. [https://calbudgetcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CA\\_Budget\\_Center\\_COVID\\_worker\\_demographics\\_04152020.pdf](https://calbudgetcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CA_Budget_Center_COVID_worker_demographics_04152020.pdf).
- 3 California Department of Social Services, as reported by Carolyn Jones, EdSource (September 2020). California sees steep drop in reports of child abuse since school campuses closed. <https://edsources.org/2020/california-sees-steep-drop-in-reports-of-child-abuse-since-campus-closed>.
- 4 United States Census Bureau (December 2020). Household Pulse Survey: December 9-21, Food Sufficiency for Households with Children, in the Last 7 Days, by Select Characteristics: California. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/demo/hhp/hhp21.html>.
- 5 California Department of Public Health (October 2020). Drop in Immunizations During COVID-19. <https://eziz.org/home/immunization-drop/>
- 6 U.S. Parents Say COVID-19 Harming Child's Mental Health (June 2020). <https://news.gallup.com/poll/312605/parents-say-covid-harming-child-mental-health.aspx>.
- 7 Rhea W. Boyd, Angela M. Ellison and Ivor B. Horn (March 2016). Police, Equity, and Child Health. *Pediatrics* (137). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2015-2711>.
- 8 Youth Truth Student Survey (Spring 2020). Students Weigh In: Learning & Well-Being During COVID-19. <https://youthtruthsurvey.org/student-weigh-in>.
- 9 The Education Trust-West (October 2020). New Statewide Poll of California Parents Finds Satisfaction with Distance Learning Has Declined Significantly. <https://west.edtrust.org/california-parent-poll-october-2020>.
- 10 National Association for the Education of Young Children (December 2020). State Data Child Care Providers are Sacrificing to Stay Open and Waiting for Relief. [https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/naeyc\\_state\\_data.policy\\_crisis\\_coronavirus\\_december\\_survey.pdf](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/naeyc_state_data.policy_crisis_coronavirus_december_survey.pdf)